UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.183/SR.201
6 January 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 201st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 17 November 1993, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. CISSE (Senegal)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

1. The agenda was adopted.

DRAFT REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION (A/AC.183/1993/CRP.2 and Add.1)

2. Mr. CASSAR (Malta), Rapporteur, introducing the draft report of the Committee to the General Assembly (A/AC.183/1993/CRP.2 and Add.1), said that the draft had been the object of thorough consideration by the Working Group at two meetings held on 26 October and 11 November 1993. In accordance with established practice, the annexes, listed in the table of contents, would consist of the original recommendations of the Committee and the recommendations and declarations adopted by participants in regional seminars and non-governmental organization meetings and symposia, preceded by a brief factual introduction. Since those documents were already known to the Committee, they had not been circulated again.

3. Briefly summarizing the contents of the report, he said that the main body of the report was in chapter IV, which gave an account of the action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in implementation of their respective mandates. Chapter VI contained the Committee's recommendations, which had been drafted taking into account recent developments. He wished to draw attention to a number of changes in the draft report approved by the Working Group and circulated to Committee members in an informal document.

4. The draft report, as revised, was adopted chapter by chapter and as a whole.

5. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) said that the Committee's draft report, and in particular the recommendations, undoubtedly reflected the important developments that had occurred in the Middle East region in relation to the question of Palestine, including the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements. On the basis of those recommendations, the Committee could make a greater contribution to the serious work aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. That in turn would help the United Nations become more involved in the settlement process and in rendering assistance to the Palestinian people under the new circumstances. The most significant change in the Committee's recommendations was the omission of the old formula of an International Peace Conference in the Middle East; the main focus was now the need for the involvement of the United Nations in the peace process. Other changes made, including those relevant to the future activities of the Committee and of the Division for Palestinian Rights, and specifically to the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), publications and seminars, seemed to be on the right course and should be reflected in the resolutions to be submitted to the General Assembly at its current session.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Observer for Palestine)

6. He wished to put forward some preliminary ideas to be taken into account in drawing up those new resolutions. In respect of the major political resolution adopted the previous year (General Assembly resolution 47/64 D), the elements of that resolution pertaining to the peace process in the Middle East should be further highlighted, in view of the Committee's recommendations, and the reference to an International Peace Conference in the Middle East needed to be deleted. There were a number of principles relating to the form of a final settlement which were extremely important and must be preserved. Some additional points could be left out of the new text. In that way the Committee would be able to submit a resolution which reflected a balanced and useful position in favour of the peace process and of the Declaration of Principles and adhered to the principles of the United Nations regarding the rights of the Palestinian people and a final settlement.

7. As to the other resolutions on the question of Palestine adopted the previous year, it might be useful to consider making some changes in the texts in question so as to enable more delegations to support them at the current session of the General Assembly; he was referring in particular to the resolution concerning the Department of Public Information (General Assembly resolution 47/64 C). In connection with the resolution on the Committee's report adopted the previous year, he felt that it would be useful to make provision for the expansion of the Committee through the admission of new members.

8. His delegation, in cooperation with the Group of Arab States and with other parties involved in the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, was seeking certain amendments to the texts of the resolutions for submission to the General Assembly at its current session, so that they would be responsive to the new political situation while maintaining basic positions of principle. His delegation could agree to the idea of drafting an additional resolution on the specific subject of the settlement process and recent developments in the Middle East, provided that such a draft resolution was considered together with the other draft resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East. However, his delegation was opposed to the idea of including in the agenda any new items relating to the situation in the Middle East; the existing items were sufficient to cover all eventualities.

9. Mr. CHIRILA (Romania) said that his delegation welcomed the positive approach taken by the Observer for Palestine. He supported the idea of including the United Nations in the political deliberations relating to the peace process. A new approach was needed to ensure active and positive involvement in that process on the part of the United Nations. The new draft resolution relating to new developments in the Middle East could encourage more countries and political circles to help the General Assembly in its promotion of the peace process and to support efforts made by the United Nations at the practical level. It was commendable that all the recommendations in chapter VI of the Committee's draft report were fully reflected in the Committee's draft resolution; it was the duty of the Committee to become involved in the peace process.

10. Mr. AL-KIDWA (Observer for Palestine) said that Palestine naturally welcomed the participation of the Committee and its Chairman in any deliberations relating to the question of Palestine, and not only in the consideration of draft resolutions on the matter. His delegation and the Arab Group had not yet considered any text of a new draft resolution but were prepared to give favourable consideration to such a text.

11. Mr. FARHADI (Afghanistan) said that the Committee's draft report was important because it had been adopted at a time of significant change in the Middle East. Palestine, as a member of the Arab Group in the General Assembly, of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and of the Non-Aligned Movement, was represented in a number of organizations. It was important that the Palestinian delegation should be active within such organizations and should not only receive information but also transmit the results of the Committee's deliberations to those groups. The Committee's work was important because many technical problems were better studied in the Committee in view of the experience of its members. The Palestinian delegation could play a very important role in the United Nations and in other organizations of which it was a member.

The meeting rose at 4.35 p.m.